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LOCAL EFFECTS AND GLOBAL IMPACT OF DEOMI TRAINING

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Local Effects and Global Impact of DEOMI Training

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Abstract

This report contains findings from three studies oriented toward program evaluation of DEOMI training effectiveness. Study One was a resurvey of commander/supervisor satisfaction of graduate performance and demonstrated consistently high levels of satisfaction across a one-year interval. Study Two ascertained commander/supervisor initial satisfaction with DEOMI graduates and found levels to be high across five content domains. For both studies, heuristic findings emerged through use of a method designed to elicit critical commentary regarding DEOMI. Study Three evaluated local effects of DEOMI training through pretest and posttest measures of achievement and attitudinal change. It was found that measures of achievement were significantly higher on completion of training. However, authoritarian attitudes were not significantly different upon conclusion of training. Findings are discussed and future research areas identified.

<p>The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and should not be construed to represent the official position of DEOMI, the military services, or the Department of Defense.</p>
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Local Effects and Global Impact of DEOMI Training

This report represents continued effort to evaluate training effectiveness of the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI). For a review of the history of program evaluation efforts at DEOMI, the reader is referred to DEOMI Research Series Publication 95-8 entitled "A Preliminary Investigation into DEOMI Training Effectiveness" (Johnson, 1995).

Briefly, evaluation of training effectiveness entails investigation into both local effects and global impact. Local effects of training include variables such as mastery of course content, student attitude change, and acquisition of skills such as problem-solving or mediation. Global impact includes the effect of training when the graduates return in their EO capacity to their home installations. Ultimately, issues addressed by global impact include fostering a productive and efficient work climate and military readiness. It is important to note that selection of both local effect and global impact variables should be based upon the unique needs of the organization (Blake & Heslin, 1993).

Although local effects are useful in documenting training effectiveness on an individual level, global impact addresses the broader question of whether DEOMI has an effect on the military in general. Ideally, assessment of global impact would include longitudinal analyses of EO climate with appropriate comparison groups (such as police units). However, limited personnel and financial resources often preclude such comprehensive and systematic efforts.

Consequently, the present study indirectly assessed global impact through survey of commander and senior leadership satisfaction with DEOMI graduates across certain domains. Two separate surveys were conducted and participants completed the Commander's/Supervisor's Evaluation of DEOMI Graduates (CSEG) and Critical Review. Study One consisted of a resurvey of the commanders and supervisors surveyed in the summer of 1995 regarding DEOMI graduate performance. These individuals received the same survey as before (the CSEG). They were also asked to assume the role of DEOMI's worst critic and generate three criticisms of DEOMI (the Critical Review). This latter request was designed to elicit criticism in that past surveys suggested the presence of positive response bias. Results were then compared with those from the summer of 1995 in order to establish whether satisfaction with DEOMI training was maintained over time.

Study Two consisted of a survey of the commanders and supervisors of three classes of recent DEOMI graduates, 95-2, 95-3, and 96-1. Respondents completed the CSEG regarding level of satisfaction with the DEOMI graduates' performance of EO tasks at their home installations. Respondents also completed the Critical Review.

Study Three consisted of measurement of local effects manifested through two domains: mastery of EO content and degree of attitude change with respect to authoritarianism. The class of 96-2 was surveyed with respect to authoritarianism to assess extent of change ostensibly related to training. A pretest posttest design was used. Mastery of EO content was assessed for the classes of 95-2, 95-3, and 96-1.

Mastery of EO content is a measure of achievement. Students' knowledge of EO issues and policy is assessed, and they are instructed in broad areas such as communication, interface with commanders, and processing of discrimination complaints. Specifically, EO content also includes instruction in identification of sexual harassment and racism and provision of guidance to personnel who perceive discrimination. Since students typically would not possess extensive experience in or knowledge of EO issues, it was expected there would be significant changes in mastery of EO content as a function of DEOMI training.

Local effects were also assessed through measurement of attitudinal change for the class of 96-2. Authoritarianism was selected as an attitudinal measure potentially sensitive to DEOMI training due to its established and well replicated relation with prejudice (Duckitt, 1994; Stephan, Ageyev, Coates-Shrider, Stephan, et al., 1994). Further, this general relationship extends to both traditional prejudice and symbolic racism (Raden, 1994). Therefore, consistent with Hope's (1979) findings on decrements of prejudice as a function of DEOMI training, it was predicted that authoritarian attitudes would show a similar decrease.

STUDY ONE

METHOD

Participants. Commanders and supervisors of graduates from DEOMI classes of 94-3 and 95-1 ($N = 147$) were resurveyed regarding satisfaction with the graduates' performance. Respondents included 88% male ($N = 56$) and 12% female ($N = 7$). Racial/ethnic distribution included 74% Caucasian ($N = 47$) and 19% African-American ($N = 12$). There was one Hispanic, two Asians, one Native American, and one "Other." With respect to rank, 52% were officers ($N = 33$) and 42% were enlisted members ($N = 27$). Respondents included 63% Army ($N = 40$), 20% Navy ($N = 13$), 9% Air Force ($N = 6$), and 8% Marines ($N = 4$).

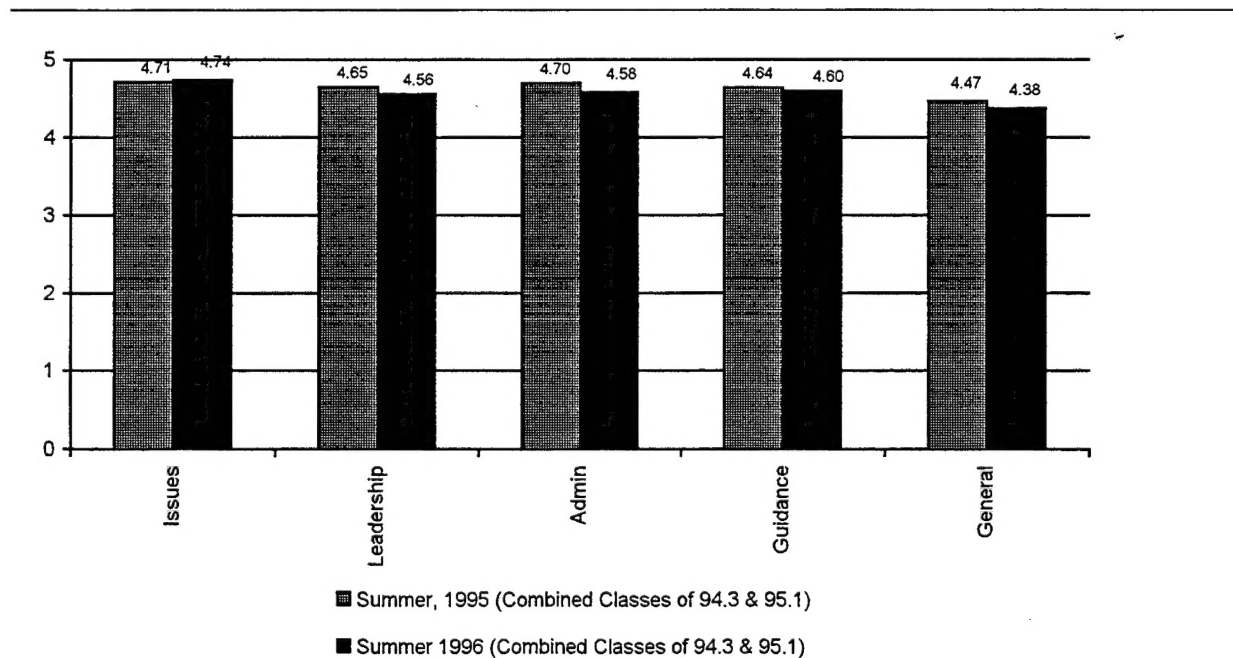
Procedure. Participants were mailed the CSEG to complete anonymously. They also received a "Critical Review," which asked them to pretend to be DEOMI's "worst critic" and generate three major issues with DEOMI. Follow-up procedures resulted in a return rate of 57% ($N = 63$) for the CSEG as of the writing of this report.

RESULTS

Two important findings emerged from this study. First, commander/supervisor satisfaction for DEOMI combined classes of 94-3 and 95-1 between the summer of 1995 and the summer of 1996 was not significantly different. Specifically, the categories of EO Issues ($t = .28$, 156 degrees of freedom, $p < .77$), Command & Leadership ($t = .83$, 135 degrees of freedom, $p < .40$), Administrative, Meetings & Training ($t = 1.05$, 125 degrees of freedom $p < .29$), Guidance, Advisement, & Processing ($t = .38$, 150 degrees of freedom, $p < .70$) and General Satisfaction ($t = .78$, 121 degrees of freedom, $p < .43$) were not significantly different between the two survey administrations. This indicates relatively stable levels of satisfaction with DEOMI graduate performance across a one-year interval.

Secondly, summarized ratings indicated high levels of satisfaction across categories of performance for the DEOMI graduate. Specifically, mean ratings of 4.74 (SD = .55) for EO Issues, 4.60 (SD = .58) for Guidance, Advisement, & Processing, 4.56 (SD = .68) for Command & Leadership, 4.58 (SD = .62) for Administrative, Meetings, & Training, and 4.38 (SD = .75) for General Satisfaction were obtained. Note these ratings ranged from a one (1) "Totally dissatisfied," to a five (5) "Totally satisfied." Results are summarized in Table One.

Table 1
**COMPARISON OF
COMMANDER/SUPERVISOR SATISFACTION
RATINGS BETWEEN 1995 AND 1996**



Preliminary analyses were performed on the Critical Review. Although not subjected to a formal content analysis, it can be reported that approximately 46% ($N = 29$) of the respondents provided critical review commentary. Preliminary content analysis indicates three major content areas. The first area concerned leadership support of DEOMI. Eleven comments focused on the need for more leadership representation among DEOMI trainees and greater leadership support of DEOMI's mission. Secondly, six comments focused on the need for more service-specific training. Finally, six comments focused on a perception that DEOMI graduate performance can be viewed by some individuals as counterproductive. That is, a focus on diversity and differences is occasionally viewed as potentially less valuable than a focus on positive EO changes made within the past decade. It must be emphasized these elicited comments have not yet been subjected to formal content analysis and should be viewed as heuristic in nature. It is also important to note that many respondents were unable or unwilling to generate critical commentary.

STUDY TWO

METHOD

Participants. Commanders and supervisors for the combined classes of 95-2, 95-3, and 96-1 ($N = 59$) completed the CSEG and Critical Review. Respondents included 86% male ($N = 51$) and 13% female ($N = 8$). Racial/ethnic distribution included 67% Caucasian ($N = 40$) and 18% African-American ($N = 11$). There were four Hispanics, two Asians, one Native American, and one "Other." With respect to rank, 61% were officers ($N = 36$) and 33% were enlisted members ($N = 20$). Respondents included 35% Army ($N = 21$), 25% Navy ($N = 15$), 38% Air Force ($N = 23$), and no Marines. The procedure was the same as in Study One. Although this study is presently ongoing, a return rate of 34% ($N = 59$) was obtained at the time of this report.

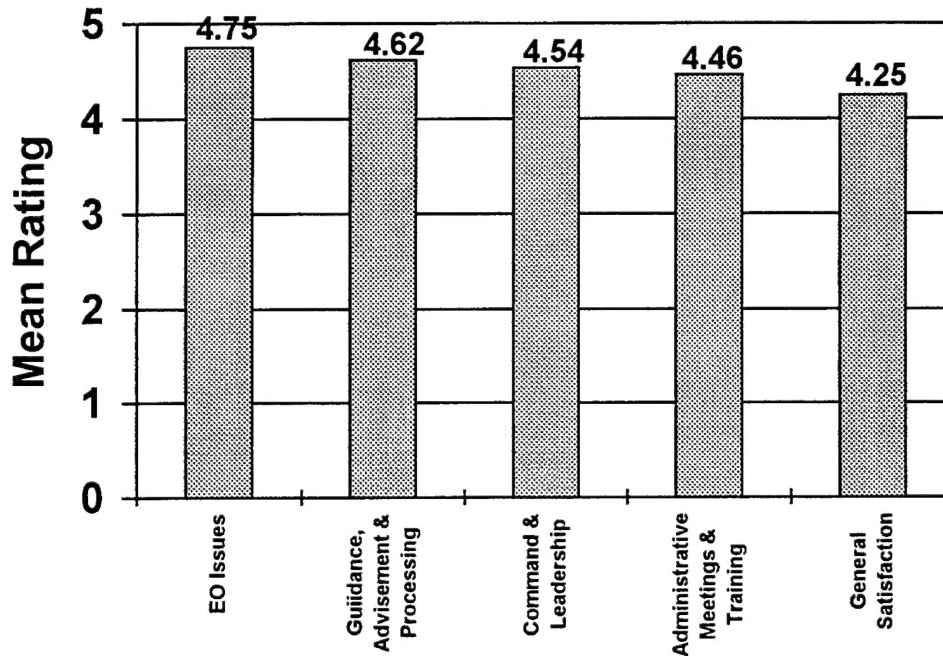
RESULTS

High levels of satisfaction were obtained for summarized ratings of EO Issues (Mean = 4.75), Guidance, Advisement, & Processing (Mean = 4.62), Command & Leadership (Mean = 4.54), Administrative, Meetings, & Training (Mean = 4.46), and General Satisfaction (4.25). Results are summarized in Table Two.

Table 2

**COMMANDER'S/SUPERVISOR'S EVALUATION
OF DEOMI GRADUATES' KNOWLEDGE AND
PERFORMANCE**

(N = 59; Combined Classes of 95-2, 95-3, 96-1)



Consistent with Study One, a preliminary content analysis was performed on the 47% ($N = 28$) individuals who responded to this request. The first of the three most endorsed categories involved the need for more service specific training. Eight individuals indicated this to be a need. Five individuals reported the length of the training to be excessive. Finally, eight individuals remarked that DEOMI graduates may benefit from more training on assessment of a situation in its entirety and within a contextual framework. Some of these respondents indicated their belief that DEOMI graduates need to be more flexible and holistic in their approach to a potentially problematic situation. As in Study One, it is emphasized these findings are preliminary.

STUDY THREE

METHOD

Participants. Students from the DEOMI class of 96-2 ($N = 108$) were surveyed with respect to attitude change. Mastery of EO Content was assessed for classes 95-2, 95-3, and 96-1.

Procedure. Students completed the Authoritarianism Scale (AS; Heaven, 1985) upon entry to the training program. This inventory has well established reliability and validity (Heaven, 1985). Students were retested with this instrument upon completion of the fourteenth week of the residential program. Since students are routinely given pretests and posttests regarding EO achievement, information on content mastery was readily available through archival sources.

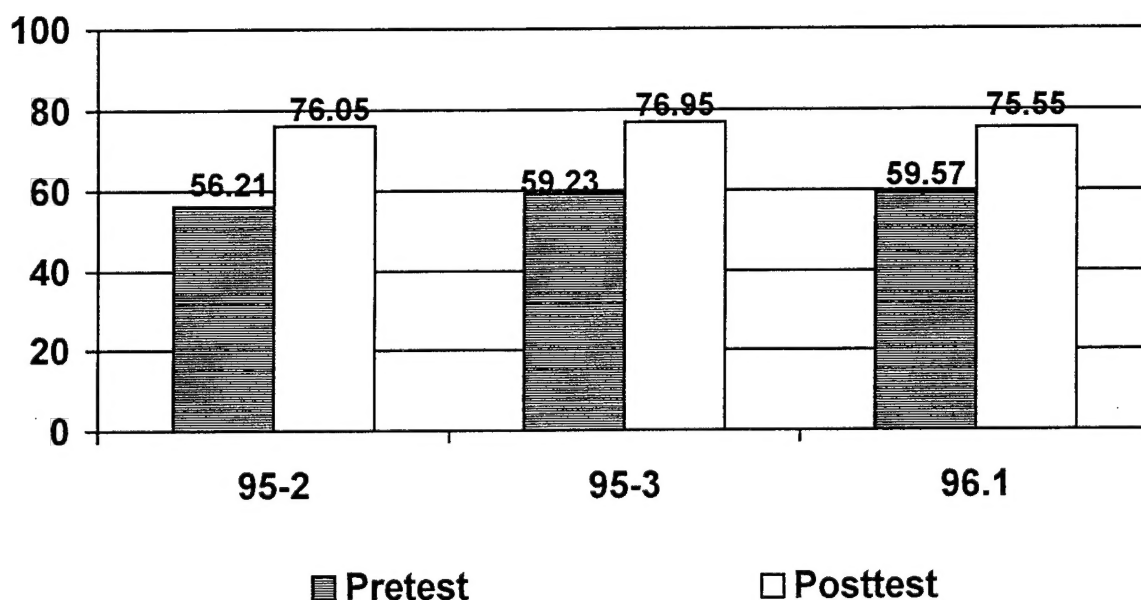
RESULTS

No significant differences were found on authoritarian attitudes between the pretest and posttest ($t = .22$, degrees of freedom = 207, $p < .82$). The pretest mean on the AS was 102.83 (SD = 7.89) and posttest mean was 103.10 (SD = 9.60).

Mastery of EO content showed significant achievement for all classes. Results are summarized in Table Three. Paired sample t -tests for the classes of 95-2 and 95-3 indicated significant improvement (95-2: $t = -27.84$, 74 degrees of freedom, $p < .000$; and 95-3: $t = 26.94$, 91 degrees of freedom, $p < .000$). The 95-2 pretest mean was 56.21 (SD = 8.83) and the posttest mean was 76.05 (SD = 7.5). For 95-3 the pretest mean was 59.23 (SD = 8.31) and the posttest mean was 76.95 (SD = 6.21). Paired sample t -tests also indicated significant improvement in EO achievement for the class of 96-1 ($t = -22.67$, 99 degrees of freedom, $p < .000$). The class of 96-1 had a pretest mean of 59.57 (SD = 8.46) and a posttest mean of 75.55 (SD = 5.10).

Table 3

EO ACHIEVEMENT MEANS



GENERAL DISCUSSION

Collectively, these three studies generally demonstrate positive local effects and global impact of DEOMI training. DEOMI is effective in training as demonstrated through the increase in EO achievement posttest scores. This indicates an increase in student proficiency in areas ranging from equal opportunity policy through interviewing techniques and administrative management. However, as noted in Johnson (1995), an area of potential improvement may lie in a focus on mastery of EO achievement. For example, a reasonable goal for mean posttest scores might be set at a criterion of 85%, which would represent a higher standard of achievement than is currently attained. Along similar lines, it is also useful to consider an evaluation of curriculum content and its representation in test-taking materials. Students would benefit from more frequent and varied evaluation attempts and these, in turn, may more accurately represent actual course content.

It is uncertain why authoritarian attitudes remained unchanged. However, there are several possible reasons. First, measurement of authoritarianism is an indirect assessment of prejudicial attitudes. Future research efforts should use instruments directly measuring prejudice such as the Modern Racism Scale (McConohay, 1986). A second possible reason is that the construct of authoritarianism and consequent use of the Authoritarianism Scale may not be appropriate for a military sample. The obtained scores were high relative to established norms for samples similar in organizational structure (such as police officers). Given the unique organizational structure of the military, authoritarianism may constitute a selection factor that tends to remain constant and is reinforced by service and the military hierarchy, as opposed to a construct sensitive to training efforts.

With respect to global impact, these studies indicate general commander/supervisor satisfaction with the DEOMI graduate's performance. Hence, DEOMI training can be appropriately viewed as having a positive impact within military installations. Importantly, longitudinal study of commander/supervisor satisfaction indicates that levels remained consistently high between June of 1995 and June of 1996. This suggests that the DEOMI classes of 94-3 and 95-1 maintained high levels of performance of their EO duties, as evaluated by their supervisors. Hence, performance decrements possibly related to "burn-out" or decreasing motivation were not present. Instead, a high level of satisfaction with performance of EO duties was maintained over time.

Graduates received mean ratings indicating high levels of satisfaction with management of intercultural/ethnic issues. They are also viewed as competent in managing issues related to racism, sexism, and sexual harassment. There was strong satisfaction expressed regarding the graduate's ability to assess EO climate trends within the command or unit, and provision of guidance to individuals who perceive themselves to be targets of discrimination. Moderate satisfaction was expressed in performance of tasks such as advisement of commanders and staff agencies on EO matters that impact upon EO climate. Finally, moderate to total satisfaction was expressed on conduct of EO training and on conduct of meetings, conferences, and briefings related to EO matters.

As noted earlier, commander/supervisor ratings for the classes of 95-2, 95-3 and 96-1 were also uniformly high. Although caution must be exercised due to the preliminary nature of this survey, obtained ratings indicate moderate to high levels of satisfaction across the domains of EO Issues, Guidance, Advisement & Processing, Command & Leadership, Administrative, Meetings & Training, and General Satisfaction.

As reviewed in Johnson (1995), greater effort could usefully be directed to longitudinal trend analysis of EO climate within the military. That is, EO climate improvement should be manifest in both prospective and retrospective trend analysis of MEOCS data. Although this may be less than ideal, as addressed earlier, presently limited financial and personnel resources preclude more comprehensive efforts.

CONCLUSIONS

Although findings from this study are generally positive with respect to local effects and global impact of DEOMI training, there are several areas for improving program evaluation efforts.

First, as noted in Johnson (1995), a comprehensive theory and model of training would promote evaluation efforts. For example, if the training model and curriculum dictates problem-solving skill acquisition as a logical goal, then assessment efforts should be directed towards this discrete area. Comprehensive evaluation efforts would thus entail periodic and systematic assessment of multiple domains on multiple occasions. In order to achieve this, program evaluation should be an ongoing component of the DEOMI mission and integrated throughout the organizational structure.

Secondly, multiple measures and methods of evaluation would enhance interpretation of program evaluation data. For example, conclusions from the present study are constrained by the use of a single method for assessment of global impact. In addition to survey data on commander/supervisor satisfaction, focus groups and gathering of factual information related to complaint management and outcome would generate much needed information on behavioral and "real life" aspects of DEOMI graduate performance. Focus groups and other methods should be directed both to the DEOMI graduate and their supervisor. Ongoing feedback loops could be established between research and evaluation efforts within DEOMI and field installations. This could ensure training consistent with evolving field needs. It would also enable DEOMI training efforts to be continually responsive to dynamic societal and cultural factors encountered in the EO Advisor's responsibilities, and ultimately enhance DEOMI's capacity to meet military readiness needs.

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